

## Message Text

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THE FOLLOWING IS A TRANSCRIPT OF COMMENTS MADE TO MEMBERS OF THE PRESS BY CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, GENERAL BROWN, FOLLOWING HIS MEETING AT THE PALACE WITH PRESIDENT SOEHARTO.

THE PRESIDENT WAS EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM, PARTICULARLY THE SECURITY SITUATION. HE TOLD ME, IN REFERENCE TO CAMBODIA, OF HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH MARSHAL LON NOL IN WHICH THE MARSHAL SHOWED SOME OPTIMISM FOR THE CONTINUED RESISTANCE OF THE CAMBIDIAN PEOPLE AGAINST COMMUNISM. I WAS ABLE TO TELL THE PRESIDENT AT HIS REQUEST OF THE RATHER DETAILED DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND OF THE STRATEGY OF PRESIDENT THIEU IN RESPONDING TO THAT COMMUNIST ATTACK AND, OF COURSE THE UNKNOWN QUESTION THAT I COULD NOT ANSWER IS WHAT THE FUTURE IN SOUTH VIETNAM MIGHT BE. THIS DEPENDS ON TWO THINGS. IT DEPENDS ON THE CONTINUED UNITED STATES SUPPORT AND ON THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM TO RESIST COMMUNISM.

Q: DID YOU TELL THE PRESIDENT IN THE CASE OF VIETNAM THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL CONTINUE ITS MILITARY SUPPORT?

A. I REMINDED THE PRESIDENT, AS HE KNOWS, THAT

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PRESIDENT FORD HAS REQUESTED FUNDS OF THE CONGRESS, THAT

IS, THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SOUTH VIETNAM, NOT ONLY THROUGH THIS YEAR BUT THROUGH NEXT YEAR. THERE ARE FUNDS IN OUR 1976 BUDGET TO CONTINUE THAT WORK. I ALSO POINTED OUT THAT GENERAL WEYAND, THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF OUR ARMY, HAD JUST COMPLETED A VISIT TO SOUTH VIETNAM FOR PRESIDENT FORD AND HAD RECENTLY MADE HIS REPORT, WHICH I DON'T KNOW ABOUT SINCE I HAVE BEEN OUT OF WASHINGTON SINCE GENERAL WEYAND GOT BACK.

Q: WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES OF DIRECT AMERICAN INTERFERENCE IN THE VIETNAM SITUATION, IN THE MATTER OF FUNDING TROOPS?

A: WELL, THAT IS OBVIOUSLY ONE OPTION AND I COULDN'T EVEN GUESS AT WHAT THE POSSIBILITIES ARE. I'M SURE IT IS UNDER ACTIVE DISCUSSION. BUT, AS YOU KNOW, THERE ARE A GREAT NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES WHO WOULD NOT FAVOR THAT. AFTER ALL, WE LOST 50,000 SONS OF THE UNITED STATES IN VIETNAM. WE FOUGHT FOR A GREAT NUMBER OF YEARS BESIDES THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE, AND WE INVESTED HEAVILY IN PREPARING THEIR FORCES TO CONTINUE THAT FIGHT WHEN WE LEFT, SO I COULDN'T EVEN GUESS WHAT WE MIGHT DO. OH YES, AS THE AMBASSADOR REMINDS ME, WE HAVE A LAW IN OUR COUNTRY WHICH PROHIBITS THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL AND SPECIFICALLY AGAINST THE INITIATION OF MILITARY ACTION IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE SPENDING OF AMERICAN MILITARY AID IN INDONESIA?

A: WE HAVE, OF COURSE, A PROGRAM AND PLAN WHICH HAS BEEN PREPARED BY THE AMBASSADOR'S STAFF HERE WITH THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH CALLS FOR AN INCREASE IN FUNDS FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO INDONESIA IN THE NEXT YEAR. OUR CONGRESS HAS REDUCED THE TOTAL FUNDS FOR SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND WE HAVE NOT YET WORKED OUT AN APPORTIONMENT OF THOSE FUNDS THAT ARE APPROPRIATED. WE IN THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND THE AMBASSADOR AND HIS STAFF HERE ARE WELL AWARE OF THE NEED AND THE GOOD

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PURPOSES TO WHICH SECURITY ASSISTANCE FUNDING AND EQUIPMENT CAN BE PUT IN THIS COUNTRY.

Q: CAN YOU TELL US HOW BIG THE REDUCTION IN FUNDS THAT HAS BEEN REQUESTED BY CONGRESS?

A: NO. I'VE, NOT THAT I WOULDN'T, BUT I'VE JUST FORGOTTEN THE NUMBERS.

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